
SPECIAL BULLETIN

October 15, 2003

Dear Superintendents of County Offices of Education, Superintendents of Unified and High School Districts, High School Principals, and District School Boards:

EARLY ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR
COLLEGE ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS
(Early Assessment Program)

A Joint Program of the California Public Schools and CSU

We are pleased to announce the implementation of the Early Assessment Program (EAP), which is the result of an extraordinary collaborative effort between the California State University (CSU), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the State Board of Education (SBE). In partnership, we have developed an early assessment program that incorporates the CSU's placement standards into existing high school standards tests in augmented English and mathematics California Standards Tests [CST]. Over the past 24 months, we have been working closely with many stakeholders including K-12 instructors and higher education faculty to reach this goal.

This project was designed to bridge the gap between high school standards and college expectations in order to decrease the number of incoming college students who require remediation in English and/or mathematics. Even though remediation is a common occurrence in all states, we now believe that we have a strategy that will substantially increase the college readiness, and eventual college success, of California's high school students, and early assessment is the key.

The eleventh grade EAP will not only strengthen the comprehensive, school-based, college preparation programs, but it will also allow each public high school and CSU to determine the college preparation status of individual students at a point in high school that will permit sufficient time (during the senior year) to attain the additional skills needed to enter CSU college-ready. For those students assessed as ready for college on the basis of the early assessment, CSU will certify these students as proficient in English and/or mathematics, and upon matriculation these students will enroll in baccalaureate courses



October 15, 2003

Page 2

without the need to take any additional placement tests. In other words, early assessment will address remediation and, at the same time, cultivate understanding of the study/learning skills necessary for college success. The EAP will foster a more challenging high school senior year, while establishing a much-needed articulation mechanism between education systems.

In 1997, the CSU Trustees set a goal that by 2007 ninety percent of all entering freshmen would be college-ready in math and English according to CSU placement standards. As a result, for the past three years, CSU has operated the Collegiate Academic Preparation Initiative (CAPI) outreach program in which it worked closely with 180 high schools across California. Key features of CAPI included collaboration between high school math and English teachers and their counterparts from the CSU, which promoted a mutual understanding of college expectations and high school standards. The main goal of CAPI was to address the increasing number of incoming freshmen entering CSU in need of substantial assistance in English and mathematics.

During the 2002-2003 school year, the CSU system worked with 100 volunteer high schools to pilot the use of the augmented spring 2003 CSTs in Reading, Writing, and High School Mathematics to determine whether students are prepared for college-level work in English and/or mathematics. Students who participated in this pilot junior-year, early assessment program will receive a test report before the end of the calendar year indicating whether they are ready for CSU college-level work or need some additional preparation.

In spring 2004, the CSU, the CDE, and the SBE will make this early assessment program available to all high school juniors who are taking the appropriate eleventh grade English and mathematics courses required for admission to the CSU. Since the spring 2003 pilot, our three organizations have worked hard to develop more effective augmented CSTs in which additional testing time is minimized and school and CSU standards are even more aligned. We hope that eleventh grade students are encouraged to volunteer to take these augmented CSTs in all California high schools. We also are working with public school leaders to identify approaches for helping high school seniors who are found to need additional preparation to meet CSU placement standards.

This collaborative effort will better align academic achievement and expectations between K-12 and higher education, resulting in better prepared students ready to succeed at the State's universities. We would therefore like to encourage your participation in this groundbreaking eleventh grade assessment program.

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin please feel free to contact Ron Fox, Administrator, Intersegmental Relations Unit, at (916) 323-6134 or via e-mail at <rfox@cde.ca.gov>, or Joy Salvetti Wolfe, Education Programs Consultant, at (916) 323-5635 or via e-mail at <jsalvett@cde.ca.gov>.

October 15, 2003
Page 3

For general questions regarding our the enhanced CSTs program, please contact Les Axelrod, Consultant, Standards and Assessment Division, at (916) 319-0337 or via e-mail at <laxelrod@cde.ca.gov>.

Sincerely,

Original Signature on File

JACK O'CONNELL
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction
California Department of Education

Original Signature on File

REED HASTINGS
President
State Board of Education

Original Signature on File

CHARLES REED
Chancellor
The California State University